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NEWSPAPER

Truck-stop fare takes new turn
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The Bush enigma: Are we prepared?
Richard Berman/Page 51

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Nation's
Restaurant News®
The Weekly Newspaper of the Food-Service Industry

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Chili's drops Taco Cabana and Flyer's
To renew focus on full service

By Peter J. Romeo

DALLAS — Although Chili's is intensifying its drive to diversify, the dinner-house chain has confirmed that neither of its first two sideline ventures, Taco Cabana and Flyer's Island Express, remain part of the plan.

The company said it would forgo rights granted under a joint-venture agreement with Taco Cabana to develop units of the Mexican cafe chain outside of Texas. Chili's has opened only three of the 20 stores it planned to develop by 1990 under the accord, which was signed about 15 months ago.

Focus on Chili's coming Dec. 19 in NRN

"They want to grow quicker than we do," said Norman Brinker, Chili's chairman.

Meanwhile, Chili's has spun off three of its six Flyer's units. The company had originally eyed the scaled-down burger-and-chicken concept as a possible means of entering the fast-growing drive-thru-only market.

"We've learned from that experience that our niche, our abilities, are in operating full-service, sit-down restaurants," Brinker said. "There will be other concepts, but we'll probably look at a sister or cousin within the full-service market."

The company is seeking to arm

*(See **CHILI'S**, page 66)*

Residents socialize during dinner at The Breakers, a private apartment building for senior citizens.

Dynamic fare flavors retirement centers

By Carolyn Walkup

CHICAGO — A new style of retirement center dining is dispelling images of uninspiring institutional food held in steam tables and served in gloomy cafeterias.

Operators are using fine dining elements — white tablecloths, lavish decorations, piano music, and scenic views — to brighten the food scene at such places as the Breakers, a private retirement community of high-rise apartments for self-sufficient senior citizens.

The new style of retirement center dining is often the highlight of the day for the residents, who voluntarily dress in their finest clothes for dinner.

"The dining room is part of their home with the elegance of a fine restaurant," said Karen Kozlowski, director of marketing for The Breakers at Edgewater

*(See **RETIREMENT**, page 4)*

Take-and-bake slices new niche
Bake-at-home pizza faces huge demand, competition

By Alan Liddle

The decade-old take-and-bake pizza segment is suffering from growing pains as it stretches to satisfy escalating consumer demands for both convenience and value.

The take-and-bake niche, in which operators prepare pizzas to order for customers to bake at home, is growing quickly as low start-up costs and the convenience boom attract more and more players. Since kitchen equipment, exhaust systems, and seating are unnecessary, take-and-bake pizzas can be sold for 20 percent to 40 percent less than pizzeria products.

Although many take-and-bake operators express optimism about the future, several serve as a reminder that growth can be costly.

Today take-and-bake chains, which have a high-acceptance among value-conscious patrons, stretch from Florida to California.

Food-service veterans that have gotten into the segment include former TGI Friday's chief Daniel Scoggin, co-founder of three-unit Juliano's Pizza Jubilee in Richardson,

*(See **TAKE-AND-BAKE**, page 66)*

FOOD WATCH

Oysters on the half-shell

CHICAGO — Shaw's Crab House is reviving an old Chicago tradition of eating oysters on the half-shell.

Shaw's, owned by Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, is featuring four to six kinds of oysters daily until next spring. They are flown in three times weekly from the coasts.

The choices include Cockenoe from Norwalk, Conn., and Pacific, European Flat, and Olympia, all from Shelton, Wash.

"Oysters on the half-shell are one of today's most dynamic dining trends," he said.

— Carolyn Walkup

Hotel/Motel show offers high-tech labor solutions
Robotics, computers touted as wave of future

By Ken Frydman

NEW YORK — High technology is filling the void created by the labor shortage, according to speakers and attendees at the 73rd annual International Hotel/Motel & Restaurant Show in Jacob K. Javits Convention Center here.

Frank Heavlin, director of resort food and beverage for the Walt Disney World Co., is working on high-tech solutions for the labor crisis — computers and robotics.

"There's a tremendous amount of technology available today, but it's a matter of affordability and interacting machines with the human factor," Heavlin said.

Food and beverage sales currently account for 40 percent of Walt Disney resorts' $800 million in total revenue, according to Heavlin. And after two new theme parks open in Orlando's Walt Disney World next year and the Paris Walt Disney World bows in 1992 with a 5,000-room hotel, the company's food and beverage business will assume an even larger role.

"We have to educate unqualified entry level and hourly people by retooling the masses for high-technology jobs," Heavlin said. "The meat slicer has to be trained for a better job because he's going to be replaced by a robot."

Michael R. Nowlis, deputy director of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration Institut de Management Hotelier International in Paris, also sees the food-service and hospitality high-tech evolution as an outgrowth of the labor shortage.

"The lack of available human beings is creating the need for technology like automated dish washers, computerized beverage dispensers, and prerecorded ordering machines," Nowlis said. McDon-

*(See **HOTEL/MOTEL**, page 4)*

CHARLES BERNSTEIN ON THE ST. LOUIS COUNCIL: 'DON'T MEET ME HERE'

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SPEAK OUT ON THE ISSUES OF 1989

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Vol. 22, No. 48 Nov. 28, 1988

NEWS DIGEST

Kettle execs propose LBO to thwart bidders

HOUSTON — Executives of Kettle Restaurants have offered to buy the 200-unit coffee-shop chain in an effort to thwart a takeover attempt by investors allied with a group of dissident shareholders.

The group, which already controls 37 percent of Kettle's outstanding shares, banded together after a bid was tendered by Kettle Acquisition Corp., a newly formed Florida concern owned by Benson/Landberg Associates and a subsidiary of Corporate Investment Co. of Pennsylvania.

The management group has bid $6 cash per share, compared with Kettle Acquisition's cash-and-stock offer, which was valued at about $7.

Little Caesars' founder tries new pizza concept

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. — Michael Ilitch, founder and chairman of Little Caesar Enterprises, plans to open an upscale pizza restaurant with Carl Oshinsky, the chef who hosts a television program called "Pizza Gourmet."

The partners' new corporation, Mica Inc., will open a 90-seat test unit next spring in West Bloomfield, Mich., an upscale Detroit suburb, Oshinsky said. The new company is not affiliated with Little Caesar.

The restaurant, as yet unnamed, will sell specialty pizzas, such as crawfish and Greek, pastas, and sandwiches, including poor boys and muffalettas, on house-made breads. "We're calling it casual Italian cuisine," Oshinsky said.

H&H negotiates deal with Riese brothers

NEW YORK — Horn & Hardart Co., having decided to sell a portion of its real-estate holdings here, said it is negotiating exclusively with Automatic Partners, a shareholding partnership that includes developer-restaurateurs Irving and Murray Riese.

The property Horn & Hardart identified for sale is valued at about $65 million, and the company operates franchised restaurants on five of the parcels.

Horn & Hardart also said Automatic Partners, which holds 6.9 percent of outstanding stock, had agreed not to acquire additional shares or foment a change in control of the company during negotiations and for a 30-day period thereafter.

Arras succeeds Smith as president of Perkins

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Donald N. Smith has relinquished the presidency of Perkins Family Restaurants to Richard K. Arras, a longtime veteran of the chain who previously served as vice president of operations.

The move will enable Smith to focus more intensely on reviving Friendly, the coffee-shop chain that was recently purchased by Perkins' parent concern, Tennessee Restaurant Corp. He remains chairman of both Perkins and Friendly.

In a related change at Perkins, Dan G. Esmond has stepped up to executive vice president of operations, a post recently vacated by the resignation of Leon Irons. Arras formerly reported to Irons, who was an original member of the management team Smith installed at Perkins shortly after assuming control of the chain.

Wayne Jones named prexy of Big Boy licensee

MILWAUKEE — Wayne Jones, formerly senior vice president of marketing for Chi-Chi's, has been hired as president of Marc's Big Boy, a franchisee here of the Big Boy coffee-shop chain.

The post had been vacant for three years.

Jones left Chi-Chi's after selling his interest in the Mexican chain during its acquisition by Foodmaker. Previously, he was president of General Mills' now-defunct Casa Gallardo chain and spent 10 years with Kentucky Fried Chicken.

BK licensees publicly reject spin-off plan

MIAMI — Pillsbury's attempt to woo Burger King franchisees into its anti-takeover camp has backfired miserably, spurring licensees to publicly reject the conglomerate's plan to spin off the hamburger chain as a separate, highly leveraged company.

The franchisees broke with their franchisor despite Pillsbury's attempt to improve relations by naming C. Ronald Petty, an experienced food-service executive, as Burger King's new president. Licensees had complained about the chain's being run by Jerry Levin, a longtime Pillsbury executive with negligible restaurant experience.

Levin retains the post of Burger King chairman, a job he assumed when president Charles Olcott resigned under pressure in the early fall. The presidency had been vacant since that time.

The franchisees' opposition could derail Pillsbury's plans to borrow $1 billion against the chain to pay shareholders cash and stock worth more than the $60 they would receive by selling their shares to Grand Metropolitan PLC of London.

Pillsbury has acknowledged that the franchisees at least could stall the spin-off, which was scheduled for Dec. 2. The delay would give Grand Met more time to buy Pillsbury stock and increase its leverage against the company's anti-takeover defense.

Grand Met said that Pillsbury shareholders have already tendered 85 percent of total shares outstanding.

Burger King's franchisee association, the National Businesss Planning Council, assailed the spin-off plan because it would load the troubled chain with debt. Repayments would stymie plans to renovate units and bolster marketing programs, the operators charged in a letter to Pillsbury chairman Philip Smith.

The dispatch was sent several days after Pillsbury executives met with council representatives here to discuss the divestiture plan. Details of the proposal had not been disclosed until that time. The letter apparently did not mention the promotion of Petty, who had served as president of Burger King's domestic division since Olcott's resignation. Previously, he headed Burger King International.

Grand Met convened a meeting with Burger King franchisees at about the same time that the Business Planning Council was negotiating with Pillsbury executives in Miami.

Arizona 206's Walsh plans to venture out on his own

NEW YORK — Chef Brendan Walsh is leaving the kitchens of Arizona 206, a much-praised bastion of Southwestern cuisine here, to pursue the development of his own restaurant.

He will be replaced at the popular East Side restaurant in mid-December by Marilyn Frobuccino, who previously cooked at Sam's Cafe and Arcadia.

Former NRA president Eure dies of cancer at 56

RALEIGH, N.C. — Thad Eure Jr., a leading figure in the food-service industry for about 20 years, has died of pancreatic cancer. He was 56.

Eure was a leading figure in both the National Restaurant Association and the North Carolina chapter. He was also president of the Educational Foundation of the NRA.

He was also known for his restaurants, especially the Angus Barn, a huge dinner house here. In recent years he founded a fast-food concept called Fat Daddy's. In the 1970s he launched Darryl's, one of the industry's first casual-theme restaurants.

FOCUS | VIEWPOINT

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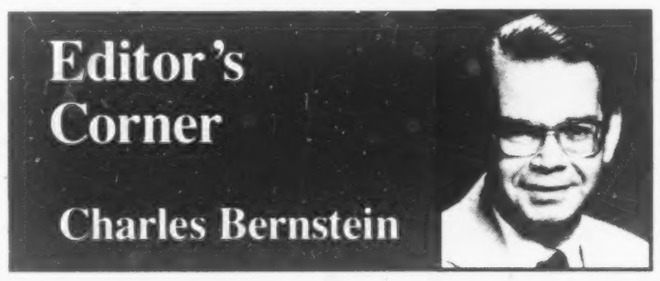
St. Louis Council: 'don't meet me here'

"Meet me in St. Louis" seems to be a bad idea for restaurateurs these days, as some of the most misguided, oppressive, and discriminatory legislation ever created is being aimed squarely at the restaurant industry.

Maybe the fact that the legislation is being exposed through the columns of this newspaper will be a vast benefit. Other cities, states, and the federal government have already passed or drafted all types of regulations that cut into the free-enterprise system and make life miserable for restaurateurs. Perhaps the warning signals emanating from St. Louis will alert food-service operators around the country to the need for opposing such legislation.



While at a recent national conference in the Marriott Pavilion Hotel overlooking St. Louis' Busch Stadium, we discovered some amazing things. First, the City Council is trying to enact a 10 p.m. curfew on restaurants within 100 feet of any residential area. This regulation does not apply to restaurants with liquor licenses and thereby is preposterous, since it suggests that customers should not be eating food past 10 p.m. but can be drinking until the normal 3 a.m. curfew.

We learned that another unbelievable regulation was actually nearing passage to force fast feeders and coffee shops to close by midnight. The apparent intent was to cut late-night noise by restricting the hours, but again this seems misdirected.

One councilman explained that the purpose was simply to overcome a "loitering menace" as well as to attack a "noise problem." Implicit in the legislation is the idea that with the downtown area greatly upgraded, the city wants to restrict the development of fast feeders, which some people maintain do not fit into its plans.

Such thinking favors higher-priced, more elegant restaurants but does not in any sense help the multitude of customers who are looking for a better price-value and by no means a fancy meal.

It is far better to let free enterprise prevail than to cut off the livelihood of some fast feeders and many coffee shops that desperately depend on late-night or all-night hours to generate maximum sales. Such places represent the true bread-and-butter basics of the restaurant industry.

While some people may not appreciate these late-night openings, others have every right to obtain a snack or a meal any time after 10 p.m. wherever a restaurant wants to be open. It is up to the marketplace to decide these matters, not the city.

These regulations actually would have already passed except for the vigilance of the Missouri Restaurant Association and a few National Restaurant Association officials who intervened upon learning of the dimensions of the threats. Leaders strode over to City Hall and succeeded in at least temporarily blocking the regulations.

But we found that the proposed ordinances are still on the docket and well may be passed, although not without a bitter battle. The specter of enforced closings, if allowed to occur in one major city, is a menace to all restaurateurs.

This is blatant discrimination of the worst type, and it would not surprise us if the legislation is politically directed by forces favoring those restaurants serving liquor — often higher-end or upscale places. Fast feeders and coffee shops, which rarely serve liquor, would merely be the victims of the law.

The St. Louis plans are an outrage not only against food-service operations but also against consumers. The proposals attempt to extend blatant regulatory authority over non-liquor restaurants, although such authority has been exercised only over those with liquor licenses — and then mainly in matters relating to liquor.

We trust that operators locally and nationally will vehemently protest the St. Louis regulations, which pose a threat to the entire country. We also trust that associations and restaurateurs in each state and city will become more vigilant in anticipating these discriminatory moves and blocking them before they get off the ground.

LETTERS

Emphasis on managers key to employee retention

Editor, NRN:

It was an extremely pleasant surprise for all of us at McGuffey's to see your follow-up Editor's Corner column Oct. 17, 1988, based on the Sept. 19 article written by your Southeast Editor, Jack Hayes. Your comments and insights regarding the issue of labor turnover are truly appreciated by those of us in the industry who understand the commitment involved in attracting and retaining excellent people in our organizations.

The emphasis of managers must continue to change toward creating an environment whereby employees are nurtured, listened to, and made to feel that they are an important part of the organization's mission.

I feel compelled at this time to qualify McGuffey's ideals and philosophy with regard to managing people for success (both ours as well as theirs) by offering up some hard facts that prove it's working. Since we started implementing our ideas two years ago, McGuffey's company-wide sales have increased by more than 20 percent, and bottom-line profits have realized an overall increase of 40 percent. The most obvious contributing factor in all of this was the reduction of labor turnover from 220 percent down to 457 percent over a two-year period.

Many people in McGuffey's were involved in and committed to achieving this company goal of reducing labor turnover, and our sincere thanks for a job well done are extended to those managers and employees who believed in us when we told them what we wanted to achieve. But one person in particular (who was not mentioned in the Sept. 19 article) deserves a very special thanks from president Keith Dunn and me.

That person is Richard Laibson, vice president of operations and co-owner. His abilities, strength of character, and encouragement of others was most certainly a driving force behind everyone's efforts to succeed in delivering the outstanding results of lower turnover in McGuffey's.

If any of us in the restaurant industry want to see our future blossom in the 1990s and beyond, the focus of our attention, energy, and commitment must be on the people who hold the responsibility of representing our products and services in the manner intended. For this to occur, industry leaders will have to be open to new ways of thinking and new approaches to managing.

If there is any industry that is ripe for this challenge, it is ours.
Best of luck!

—Michael D. Brandson
vice president of Human Resources
McGuffey's Restaurants Inc.
Ashville, N.C.

Trends and publicity do not a restaurant make

Editor, NRN:

Thank you for your Sept. 5 Editor's Corner, "Golden oldies: Tradition wins the fray." After all is said and done, it is good to hear a sober and professional voice which tells us that trend and publicity do not a restaurant make.

The dining public should never be underestimated and in the long run will stay only with those operators that deliver, not promise.

—Paul Kovi
Tom Margittai
co-owners
The Four Seasons
New York

DC MUFSO conference a learning experience

Editor, NRN:

I'd like very much to thank you for the great learning experience you gave me at the MUFSO Conference.

I have never attended a conference before in which, as at this one, whenever a speaker finished, the following speaker was better.

You gentlemen and your staffs are to be congratulated for an outstanding performance. I hope in the future you will continue to create many more informative MUFSO Conferences.

— Michael D. Ostas
House of Chimichangas
El Matador
Holland, Ohio

Letters may be sent to the editor, Nation's Restaurant News, 425 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022.

More letters appear on page F8

MARKETING

Mac Tonight encore livens McD awareness

Fast feeder climbs 3 points in NRN poll

By Bill Carlino

LINCOLN, Neb. — McDonald's climbed three percentage points in the Nation's Restaurant News Adtrack Poll last month on the heels of a sluggish September, when its fall advertising campaign stirred minimal increases in top-of-mind awareness.

NRN Adtrack

The hamburger giant rode the successful reintroduction of the popular piano-playing Mac Tonight character during its prime-time ad flurries and captured a 51 percent consumer rating. In September the company had registered a nominal 1-percent increase from the figure for the August survey.

Officials of McDonald's declined to make any comment on the consumer-awareness increase.

Burger King advertising effectiveness remained stagnant, having dropped a full percentage point in the October survey after remaining at 14-percent recall for two consecutive months.

The 6,500-unit chain, currently embroiled in parent Pillsbury's planned spin-off, received a lukewarm consumer reception to a long-awaited TV campaign.

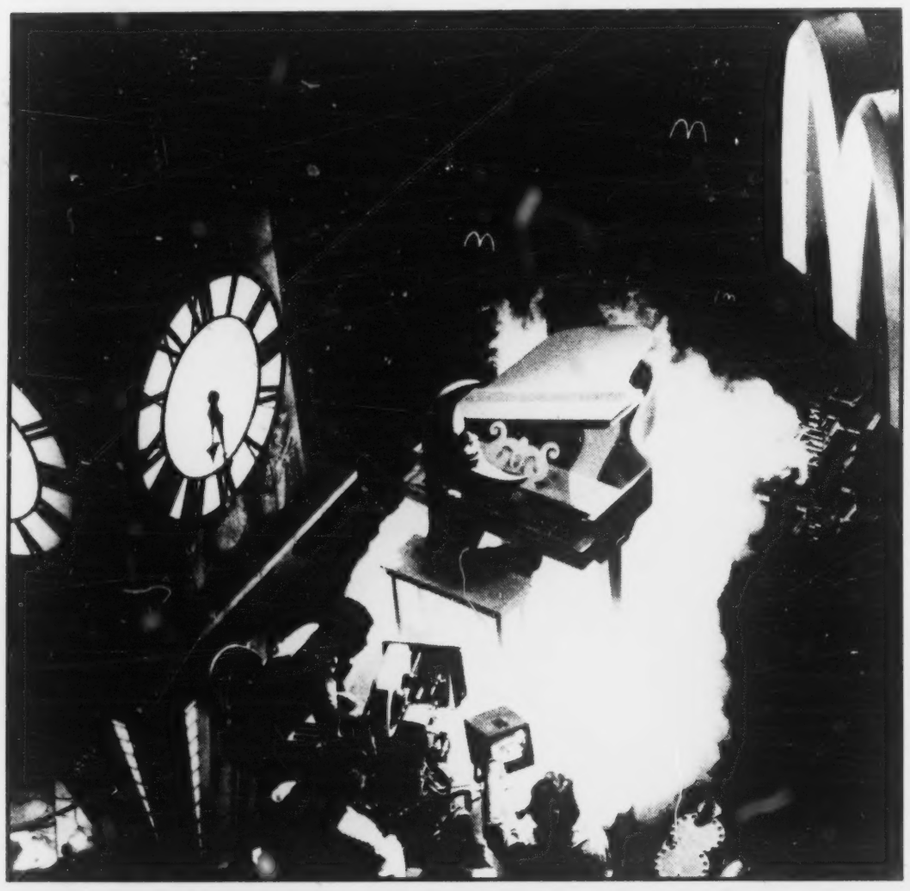
In the NRN poll, SRI Research Center Inc., which is based here, asked a representative sample of 1,000 consumers across the country to answer this question: "Of all the fast-food advertising that you have read, seen or heard in the last month, which advertising first comes to mind ?"

Wendy's continued its monthly roller-coaster consumer awareness showing with its third consecutive two-point change. The chain, which is based in Dublin, Ohio, dipped two percentage points to capture 7 percent of those surveyed.

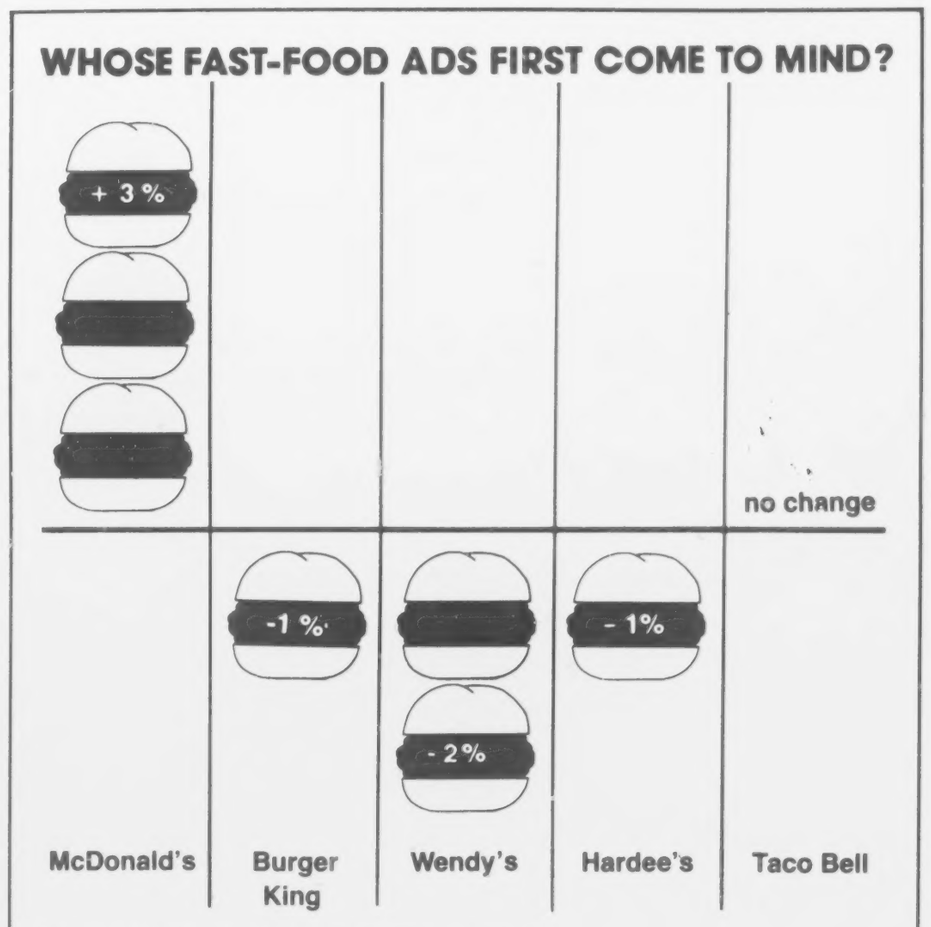
Wendy's October awareness showing follows a two-point increase in the September poll and a two-point slide during August.

Four percent of polled consumers recalled Hardee's fast-food advertising, a one point drop from the previous month, while Pizza Hut climbed one point and got a 2-percent recall score.

Kentucky Fried Chicken, which scored a 1-percent consumer awareness mark in September's SRI survey, fell to a zero recall mark this month.

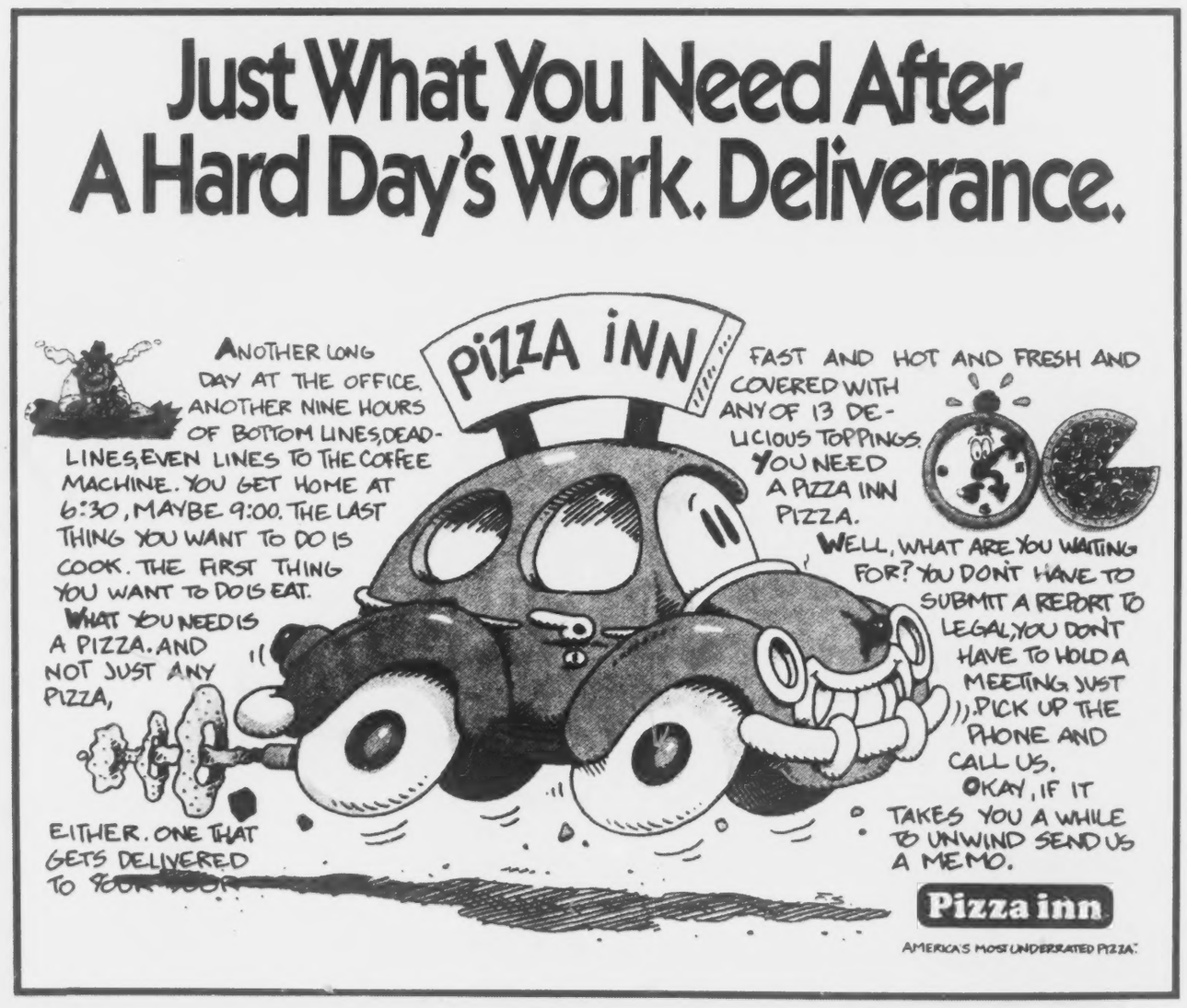


McDonald's films a Mac Tonight commercial.



Source: NRN Adtrack, SRI Research Center, Lincoln, Neb.

AD WATCH


Just What You Need After A Hard Day's Work. Deliverance.
PIZZA INN
ANOTHER LONG DAY AT THE OFFICE. ANOTHER NINE HOURS OF BOTTOM LINES, DEAD-LINES, EVEN LINES TO THE COFFEE MACHINE. YOU GET HOME AT 6:30, MAYBE 9:00. THE LAST THING YOU WANT TO DO IS COOK. THE FIRST THING YOU WANT TO DO IS EAT.
WHAT YOU NEED IS A PIZZA. AND NOT JUST ANY PIZZA,
EITHER. ONE THAT GETS DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR.
FAST AND HOT AND FRESH AND COVERED WITH ANY OF 13 DE-LICIOUS TOPPINGS. YOU NEED A PIZZA INN PIZZA.
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO LEGAL, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD A MEETING. JUST PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL US.
OKAY, IF IT TAKES YOU A WHILE TO UNWIND SEND US A MEMO.
Pizza inn
AMERICA'S MOST UNDERRATED PIZZA.

HI-OCTANE PIZZA: This illustrated ad urges consumers to take advantage of Pizza Inn's delivery service after a tough day at the office. The promotion, complete with discount coupons, appeared in circulars throughout the Houston area.

"AdWatch" submissions should be either proofs, prints, or stills of a new print, direct mail, or television advertisement for a restaurant or restaurant chain, with accompanying information on the responsible agency name, if any, and the media time and placement schedule. Submissions should be sent to: Marketing Editor, Nation's Restaurant News, 425 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

NRN MARKETING DIGEST

Red Lobster launches new promo

ORLANDO, Fla. — Red Lobster, the nation's largest seafood dinner-house chain, is launching a new dinner promotion featuring several specially priced shrimp and lobster platters.

Advertising is scheduled to debut this week. Prices range from $7.95 to $14.95. At the low end is an 'I Love Shrimp Platter' consisting of 10 grilled shrimp, four fried, four sautéed with lemon and peppers, and a 3.5-ounce portion of "Cajun popcorn" shrimp.

At the top of the line is the Lobster Trio, consisting of a broiled langostino, a fried slipper lobster, and a broiled rock-lobster tail.

Arby's rolls candy cane swirl

ATLANTA — With the holidays rapidly approaching, Arby's is set to roll out its "Candy Cane Polar Swirl," a vanilla shake combined with crushed peppermint candy. Served in a 16-ounce plastic cup, the holiday version of the chain's popular frozen dessert item will be available during December at all participating Arby's restaurants.

Chicago Hilton offers wild game

CHICAGO — In conjunction with the fall hunting season, the Chicago Hilton and Towers implemented a wild-game menu promotion in its Buckingham's restaurant.

Grilled venison sausage with black pepper linguine, terrine of pheasant, and petite marmite wild-game soup with vegetables and quail eggs were among the appetizer selections, while Buckingham's wild-game entrées included roasted quail or venison, saddle of domestic rabbit, and ballotine of pheasant.

Pizza Huts, JC Penney team up

HOUSTON — Pizza Hut restaurants here will team up with J.C. Penney in a merchandising tie-in to the new George Lucas and Steven Spielberg animated film "The Land Before Time."

Pizza Hut is sponsoring dinosaur-themed coloring contests as well as offering discount coupons on food, which will also be available at the department store. J.C. Penney is offering various dinosaur-themed merchandise items, including bed linens and children's clothing.